SECURITY ISSUE CONFLICT WITH PEACE ISSUE? R30.

348

Q: Doesn't the F-15 enhancement decision and the initial Congressional and Israeli reactions to it highlight the difficulty of putting together a regional anti-Soviet strategy that must, in part, depend on regional countries with conflicting goals?

A: Fashioning and implementing a strategy in the area that counters the Soviets will not be easy. But simply because the task is difficult is no reason not to attempt it--especially since our stakes in the area leave us no choice in this regard. In pursuing our strategy we will be mindful of complicating factors, but we will still push ahead just as we have done in the F-15 case. We made this decision not in isolation but as part of our regional effort that involves bolstering the capabilities of local states and enhancing our presence in the area. At the same time, we recognized that this decision could have an adverse impact on Israeli security and have taken steps to minimize this impact. The important point here is that our strategy as a whole is geared to deal with the one threat the Israelis cannot handle on their own--i.e., the Soviet threat; to the extent that this transfer furthers our strategy in the region--as we believe it does--it will in the long run make Israel more and not less secure.